

556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

● [736]

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

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'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.³ When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

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³ It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

LAW AND ORDER

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The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelfth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese.

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in

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622 his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower
 [736] from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else,
 and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary
 people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission
 of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The
 Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household,
 but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal
 is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers
 whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a
 mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling
 little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tam-
 zoom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed
 a *namprek-fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole
 rice from the God *Komsithing*). Compared with the other Lepchas
 of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from
 lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son.
 He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has
 been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder
 died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neigh-
 bours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given
 preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders
 taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words.
 When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather'
 (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah,
 and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the
 Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and
 was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month
 after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came
 from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long
 voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an
 old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputa-
 tion to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and
 a rupee.³ His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

[43] ³ In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by
 [177] its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present
 or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying,
 according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin
 and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if
 the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the
 scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the